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CPW Report No. 24 -- USSR

(Feb. 16-Mar. 2, 1952)

SUMMARY

The South Ukrainian and Main Turkmenian canals are criticized for lack of proper organization and slow progress. Steady, rhythmic work "without fits and starts" (bez ryvkov i shturmovshchiny) is PRAVDA's prescription for industry which still needs a great deal of prodding. The lumber industry, having failed in its 1951 production plan, is still unable to keep up with its schedules. The shortage of skilled industrial workers and lax discipline claim much official attention. There is little information on the railroad, mining, and fishing industries.

References to matters of ideology are few and scattered. Amateur art in the USSR is said to be disappointing and in need of more and better guidance. Nationalistic sentiments have not yet been stamped out in the Ukraine, presumably in its Western provinces, according to one source. The Kazakhs are reminded once more that their destiny is tied up with that of the Russian and Soviet peoples.

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Industry: Canal Construction Too Slow: The construction of the Main Turkmenian Canal, according to a Kornilov report carried by PRAVDA (Feb. 18, not broadcast), has been left virtually without leadership and help (fakticheski ostalas bez rukovodstva i pomoshchi). Having failed to exercise supervision for a long time, the Communications Ministry sounded an alarm (zabilo trevogu) when construction work almost came to a standstill. The Ministry, however, is not doing much now beyond issuing orders, directives, and instructions: "The stream of paper flows on" (bumazhnyi potok prodolzhayetsia). Orders to build railroad spurs leading to the construction sites were issued last December, but so far neither the rails nor the bolts and ties have been made available. The result is another order to supersede the first one and so on -- but little interest is taken in the implementation of the decisions.

Kornilov attributes similar procrastination to the Ministry of the River Fleet. The latter's failure to deliver the necessary building materials to the Amu-Darya construction site is disorganizing the work and causing unnecessary delays. The 1952 plan, for example, calls for the delivery of one-and-a-half million tons of materials but the transportation facilities the Ministry has assigned for the job will not be able to carry more than 500,000 tons.

The situation at the South Ukrainian Canal site and Kakhovka hydroelectric power plan is reviewed in a lengthy decision of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Feb. 27) and found to be "extremely unsatisfactory." Labor there is said to be poorly organized, discipline is low, production costs are far above the planned figures and the building machinery is "being utilized with extremely poor results."

The Central Committee also considers it inadmissible (nedopustimo) that many labor-consuming work processes are done manually while a large part of the available machinery is not utilized at all. Sharply criticized are the leading "economic and Party workers" in charge of the mentioned construction who "seldom speak to the workers" and do not bother much about lectures and talks for them. Looking further into this construction business, the Central Committee reveals that the living conditions of the workers on the project are anything but normal:

The living quarters are not provided with furniture or household equipment...secretaries of Party organizations... seldom ever visit the communal living quarters and do not take any measures for tidying them up.

The 30-point Party decision lays particular stress on the "creation of normal living conditions" (sozdanie normalnikh usloviy zhizni) for the workers and the technical and professional personnel, and the immediate liquidation of the labor turnover which presumably has something to do with those living conditions. The neighboring Stalino, Dnepropetrovsk, Voroshilovgrad, Kiev, and Kharkov Oblasts are called upon to help relieve the acute shortage of skilled personnel some of which is to

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be made available "through the organized mobilization of labor." The Ministry of Health is urged to take immediate steps towards the improvement of the existing medical and sanitary services, the establishment of creches for workers' children and the opening of hospitals and polyclinics. The appropriate Party and Soviet organizations are also ordered to "insure the proper reception" and economic aid for the new settlers (prereselentsi) in the collective and State farms of the recently reclaimed Verkhne-Ingulets and Nizhne-Ingulets irrigated areas.

Centralized control, rhythmic work: Industrial management, labor discipline and production are discussed editorially in two PRAVDA issues (Feb. 19 and 25). One-man management (edinonachalie) is said to be one of the answers to such chronic industrial maladies as poor labor discipline, defective production, and idle machinery. Lack of centralized control is also held responsible for increased production costs as has recently been revealed in a number of machine-building plants. Some of them even go so far as to expand their original production cost estimates without regard to the actual figures. These and other shortcomings usually amount of the "unrhythmic work" (neritmichnaya rabota) which characterizes the operation of some of the largest plants of the Uralmet Metal Trust and the Stalinugol Coal Trust.

Technical know-how (tekhnicheskaya gramotnost), says the editorial of Feb. 25, must be the ultimate aim of every Soviet industrial plant. The inadequate utilization of machinery, the paper implies, can be remedied only by what it calls a "precise work tempo" (chetkiy ritm raboty). This, however, is not the case with a number of plants, particularly the Kolonna Locomotive Works and the Taganrog boiler-making plant, where "jerky and fits-and starts" (ryvki i shturmovshchina) methods are the accepted methods of work:

These shortcomings are due in no small measure to the weakening of the one-man-management (edinonachalie) principle...the most important principle of proper leadership in production.

Russian version:

V nemaloy stepeni eti nedostatki obyasnyautsia oslableniem edinonachalia...kotoroye yavlyaetsia vazhneishim printsipom pravilnogo rukovodstva proizvodstvom.

Lumber Production Still Lagging: The lopsided performance of the lumber industry, particularly in Vologda, Novosibirsk, Velikie Luki, and Pskov Oblasts, is still the target of frequent editorial criticism. But whereas most of the previous newspaper strictures were directed against poor production quality and lack of assortment, the current complaint is that the industry is behind its quantitative assignments as well. Thus SOVETSKAYA SIBIR (Feb. 16) announces that since the beginning of the year lumber production has fallen short of the target by "tens of thousands" of cubic meters. An indirect admission of the breakdown of the lumber production plans is contained in the paper's disparaging reference to some lumber industry officials who "attempt to explain the breakdown of the plans" by claiming a lack of skilled machine operators. This claim, however, is not seriously disputed by the editorial beyond the assertion that the "main reason for the nonfulfillment" of the plans is the most unsatisfactory use of equipment and machinery:

Of all the tractors at the lumber camps only one-half are at work while the rest stand idle because of all kinds of faults. A similar condition exists in the case of winches.

That the labor shortage in the lumber camps is not an empty claim may be gathered from the paper's vague reference to the "Bolshevist care" for the welfare of the lumberjacks which "is absent." Such conditions do not attract many volunteers to the lumber camps, and Legostayev Rayon is cited as a case in point: "Only 3 men instead of 100 were sent to the lumber camps from the rayon...." Production and deliveries are said to be slowest in Cherepanov, Chulymsk, Kuybyshev, Toguchinskiy, and Kolyvansk rayons.

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The shortcomings of the lumber industry, says VELIKOLUKSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 17), have an adverse effect on the over-all industrial production of the oblast. The paper makes no reference to the shortage of labor, but such a shortage is implicit in the appeal to the various rayon Party organizations to send Party and Komsomol members to the camps to "set a good example...and inspire the masses of workers" to greater efforts. The editorial is apparently not unmindful of the inadequate living conditions in the lumber camps but does not pursue the subject beyond the suggestion that the trade unions and management "should show more care about the welfare...of the workers." More critical however, is the daily's attitude toward falling production:

It should be made clear to the managers of the timber industry enterprises that the nonfulfillment of the plan is a Party and State offense, and that they will be made responsible for the nonfulfillment of the State plan.

Poor labor organization, low discipline, and an indifferent attitude toward technology in general are, in the opinion of PSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 2), responsible for the "very slow" timber preparations in the oblast. In some lumber trusts, the electric saws and other equipment received last year have not yet been used, while in others there is no Socialist competition among the workers. The result is that a "considerable number" of lumberjacks fail to keep up with their production norms.

Technical equipment is also neglected or underestimated in the Trans-Carpathian forest industry, says RADYANSKA UKRAINA on Feb. 20. In some lumber camps, the paper declares, mobile generators, winches, trucks, and tractors are not fully utilized while in others they are not used at all. This happened, the paper says, because qualified cadres were not trained in time.

Personnel training for the lumber and other industries of the Byelorussian SSR is the subject of editorial discussion by ZARYA (Feb. 18). The supply of skilled workers in the Republic is said to be far below the demand, and the qualifications of the supposedly trained workers are somewhat below expectations. The Labor Reserves Administration is upbraided for "not exercising efficient control" over the training schools, and the Byelorussian Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge is held responsible for the inadequate technical education of the graduating personnel. The lack of technical knowledge is felt particularly in Minsk which is a large industrial center. This point is not elaborated, however.

The shortage of skilled workers is also acute at a number of unnamed construction sites along the Dnieper River, and this, says RADYANSKA UKRAINA (Feb. 20), is something to worry about:

New excavators, bulldozers, ditch diggers, motor vehicles and other machines are arriving there daily. The first suction dredges have been assembled. But who will take the controls of these machines? who will operate them? These questions cannot but worry the Party organizations....

MOLOT (Feb. 27) believes that the shortage of skilled workers in Rostov Oblast could have been alleviated if the method of "reshuffling personnel" were not substituted for the "genuine training of cadres." In the Gundurov Coal Trust alone, for example, 5 chiefs of pits, 8 chief engineers, and 11 section chiefs were replaced within one year. One section chief was removed four times "for bad organization of work" and reappointed to the same job every time. "Serious weakness" in the cadre training system are noted particularly in Krasniy Sulin, Selivanovskiy, Nikolayevskiy, and a number of other rayons and towns.

Railroads: The martial law proclaimed during the last war on the Soviet railroads has never been officially abolished and is presumable still in effect. Radio and press references to discipline among railway workers are infrequent since the power of the Political Department instituted under the martial law is virtually unlimited. A PRIZYV editorial (Feb. 20) oddly enough discusses the performance of the Vladimir Oblast railwaymen and suggests that "a tightening of discipline" is what they really need. This, the paper continues, applies not only to the scheduled movement of trains but also to such enterprises as depots and repair shops, the signal system, and others. The railroad workers are reminded that "every commitment" made in the letter to Stalin by all the USSR railwaymen (Home Service, Aug. 4, 1952) must be honored on time. It is also suggested that an improvement of the Party organizations and groups within the railroad system might do a great deal toward a better performance on the part of the workers.

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Another complaint that all is not well on the railroads comes from KOMMUNIST (Feb. 19). The Ryazan-Uralsk railroad line is said to have put in a poor performance last year, and that "a fundamental improvement in its work...is not evident this year." Timetables are "often violated" and the line is unable to cope with the planned carloadings, particularly in regard to cement, timber, and "other important" goods. The paper wonders why the Railroad Political Department has failed to "intensify" its political control over the work and why the 25-point program it had mapped out has "never passed the written stage."

Mining: The only reference to this industry is heard in a broadcast from Dnepropetrovsk on Feb. 19. ZARYA declares editorially that the Krivoy Rog ore basin is "still very far from satisfying the ... demands" of the ferrous industry. In January a number of mines fell below the plan, and in February the work "deteriorated still further." The amount of ore ready for extraction, says the paper, is considerably below the quota. But that is not all. It appears that in the race for quantity production quality is relegated to a place of secondary importance. The Lenin Ore Trust, for example, which regularly fulfills its extraction plans, is just as consistent in its failure to achieve the required quality of the ore.

Ideological Weaknesses: The output on ideological affairs is meager, and most of the available material appeared in the press but was not broadcast. Unlike previous discussions on the theme, PRAVDA and regional criticism of un-Marxist behavior is restrained. Official attention is still focused on the peripheral areas of the USSR -- Moldavia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

Stage production in the Moldavian SSR, says Subbotin in PRAVDA (Feb. 17), is not in keeping with the "great transformation" (velikoye preobrazovanie) that characterizes life in Soviet Moldavia. The author lists a number of plays which, despite the playwrights' good intentions, appear in a somewhat distorted ideological light. Delianu's "Volshebnyaya Bulava" (Magic Mace), based on the idea of Moldavian-Russian friendship, has utterly failed to convey that idea to the public. Few Russian or Soviet plays, according to Subbotin, ever find their way to the Moldavian stage, and anything dealing with contemporary Soviet life is virtually ignored.

VILNA UKRAINA (Feb. 20) says that traces of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism are still very much in evidence, presumably in the Western provinces of the Republic. The Ukrainian public enemy number one, the bourgeois nationalists, acting at the behest of the American imperialists, are even said to be dreaming of dominating other nations:

(They) are trying to stir up hostility among the people of the Soviet country and to impose the Ukrainian people and culture upon the other peoples of the Soviet Union.

Ukrainian version:

Namakhayutsia rozpalaty vorozhnytsiu mizh narodami
radyanskoj krainy, nakinuty ukrainsky narod i ikh
kulturu inshym narodam Soyuzu SSR.

Inferring that the enemy of the Ukrainian people has been physically eliminated by the "crushing defeat" inflicted on him, the paper refers to the "back-sliders" and the "remnants" of capitalism which have not yet been "uprooted" in the country:

The Party organizations must remember that these back-sliders of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism are evidence of an underrating of the role of the friendship between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.

Ukrainian version:

Partiyny organizatsyi povinny pamyataty shcho v nevykorennykh retsedivakh ukrainskoho burzhuznoho natsionalizmu ye vypadki koly proyavlautsia nedootsinka roli druzhby ukrainskoho i rossiyskoho narodu.

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A report from Alma-Ata (Feb. 18) adverts to the old official contention that the history of Kazakhstan is still full of ideological loopholes, and that the whole thing smacks of anti-Marxism:

So far, no deep scientific Marxist history of Kazakhstan has been written, and the significance of some national movements in the history of Kazakhstan has, up to very recently, been incorrectly elucidated, in an anti-Marxist way and from a bourgeois nationalist standpoint.

All these misinterpretations, says the report, are now being corrected in Shuimbayev's pamphlet under the long title "Against Nationalist Perversions in the Exposition of the Reactionary Feudal-Monarchichal Movement of Temissara Kasymov." This pamphlet is said to "prove" that Kazakhstan's unity and security dates back to its union with Tsarist Russia. Prior to that there was no Kazakh country as such but a number of warring feudal principalities who were "systematically" attacked by outside non-Russian forces:

Even at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries Kazakhstan was attacked by Dzhungar feudal lords who robbed and destroyed the country. Only with the assistance of Russia and the acceptance by the Kazakhs of Russian citizenship was the threat of subjugation of the Kazakh people by Dzhungaria eliminated.

Russian version:

Eshche v kontse semnadsatogo i nachale vosemnadsatogo vekov na Kazakhstan napali dzhungarskie feodaly, grabivshie i razoryavshie stranu. Tolko blagodarya pomoshchi Russii i prinyatiu kazakhami...rossiyskogo poddanstva byla likvidirovana ugroza paroboshchenia kazakhskogo naroda dzhungariyey.

Serious mistakes of a principle nature (seryoznie printsipialnie oshibki) have been discovered in the "History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan", according to a Sitov report published in PRAVDA on Feb. 27. The recent plenary session of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party is reported to have taken another look into the Republic's ideological life and found it less austere than expected. Like their Kazakh neighbors, to the north, the Uzbeks are said to "underestimate" the significance of their unification with Russia in the last century:

The inclusion of Uzbekistan as a component part of Russia... was of great progressive significance for the Uzbek people. A thorough study of this question is one of the essential problems of historical science.

Russian version:

Vkluchenie Uzbekistana v sostav Rossii...imelo bolshoye progressivnoye znachenie dlia uzbekskago naroda. Izuchenie etogo voprosa yavlayetsia odnoi iz aktualnikh zadach istoricheskoi nauki.

The Ministry of Education and the Uzbek Writers Union are taken to task for the unaccountable laxity in their respective spheres of enlightenment. The Uzbek writers, the Central Committee reveals, have not produced a single "monumental" work, from the ideological standpoint, in the postwar period. The works of some men of letters still betray nationalistic tendencies. Similar aberrations are attributed to the publishers of children's literature wherein admiration for the feudal lords, their love affairs, etc. is often quite obvious. Some textbooks contain adulation for the Moslem tyrants of the Orient and are "fouled up with Arabic and Persian terminology which is not understood by the Soviet school children" (zasoreny arabskimi, persidskimi terminami, neponiatnymi sovetskim shkolnikam).